

Track & Field | USD At Nationals

Trio Make NCAA Outdoor Debut This Week

BY JEREMY HOECK

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VERMILLION — The career trajectory for Cody Snyder has appeared head toward this week's Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships.

From AAU national champion as a middle schooler, to standout high school thrower, to conference champion as a college athlete, and now the national meet, things have been trending upward for the University of South Dakota thrower.

Snyder, a junior from Lake Andes, is seeded 12th in the men's discus at the D-I Championships, which begins today (Wednesday) in Eugene, Ore. The men's discus, with a field of 24 competitors, will be held on Friday afternoon.

"I'm really confident right now, we've been peaking really well," Snyder said Monday during a media gathering at the DakotaDome. "I feel more athletic than I've ever felt in my entire life."

"It's time to go hit a big mark."

In a career filled with big marks, Snyder heads to nationals on a hot streak. His qualifying toss of 186-feet-11 at the NCAA West Region Preliminary Round two weeks ago broke the USD and state records by three inches.

That performance ensured Snyder would be the first Coyote men's track athlete to qualify for the national meet. He will be joined by four female teammates in Oregon — Bethany Buell and Emily Grove in the pole vault, Megan Glisar in the high jump and Meghan Dennis in the javelin.

Being the first male athlete to qualify has followed that trajectory, according to USD men's track coach Dave Gottsleben.

"When I met with him four years ago after his junior year, that's what I told him. 'If you come to the U, you could be the flag bearer for us at the national meet,'" Gottsleben said Tuesday.

"It's our third year now being eligible for this, and Cody got it done. We're very pleased with him."

Snyder's father, Mike, was a standout thrower for the Coyotes back in the 1980's, and prepared Cody well for the college level, Gottsleben said. USD throws coach Tyler Custis has taken the baton and guided Snyder — and the other throwers — in Vermillion.

"He's a good student and a good person; we've done well with South Dakota kids," Gottsleben said. "Coach Custis has done a wonderful job with him in college, just like his dad did with him in high school."

While in high school at Andes Central, Snyder earned five top-2 finishes at the Class B State Track Meet, capping his career



with titles in the discus and shot put as a senior in 2011. He still holds the Andes Central records in both throwing events.

"My dad and I had gone to these summer national meets, and so I knew pretty well where I was at and what level I was at," Snyder said. "By high school, I was pretty certain I'd be a thrower."

In two outdoor seasons for the Coyotes, Snyder — with teammate Kyle McKelvey of Beresford — has been one of the Summit League's top throwers. He was second in the discus and third in the shot put last spring, and last month, won a conference title in the discus and was third in the shot put.

At the D-I meet this week, Snyder is ranked 12th out of 24 competitors and is slated into the second flight. He said he will likely need a toss of 192 or 193 feet to reach first-team All-American status — top eight.

"I'm in the second flight, so I'll know pretty much know what I have to do to make finals," Snyder said. "My goal is to get All-American, so I'll know what I have to do to get there."

He has, however, maintained his humble attitude about not looking ahead too far.

"Until the end of the year, I don't really want to think about what I've done so far," Snyder said. "When it's over, I'll reflect a little bit and think about how I did. I just want to focus on the next meet."

After this spring, Snyder will have one outdoor and two indoor seasons of eligibility remaining with USD. Gottsleben said from there, Snyder will likely have opportunities to continue competing.

"It's certainly something he's discussed with Tyler (Custis) and me, and we want to support him," Gottsleben said.

Megan Glisar

Other than pole vaulters Bethany Buell and Emily Grove, the only other athlete headed to Eugene who has experience at a

national meet is Coyote junior Megan Glisar.

Her experience, however, came at the NAIA level. She was rather successful there, though.

Glisar, a transfer and former national champion from Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa, is seeded 14th in the women's jump for the Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships. She will compete on Saturday afternoon, the last of the five USD athletes headed to Oregon.

"I was very successful, but this is a whole other level," Glisar said Monday during a media gathering. "I knew I'd have to improve a lot to make it to this meet, and so I just had to trust my coaches and trust the training."

"I really didn't know how it would go, but luckily it ended up working out really well."

Glisar, who previously attended the University of Iowa, was the 2012 NAIA indoor national champion in the high jump while at Morningside and later took second place at the NAIA outdoor meet.

She transferred to USD and suddenly found herself with higher levels of competition, according to USD women's track coach Lucky Huber.

"There are some people that do well when there's more competition, and there's other people that wilt a little bit," Huber said. "So I wasn't sure how she would get through that."

Asked Monday about her transition from the NAIA level, Glisar pointed to the coaching staff in Vermillion as helpful in that change. She has been working with Ben Jasinski, a graduate assistant jumps coach.

"It's been very easy, actually, going from NAIA to division one," Glisar said. "You would think it would be a lot different, but the team was very accepting; the coaches are great."

A native of Sergeant Bluff, Iowa, Glisar comes into the D-I meet with a qualifying mark of 5-feet-10.5, which is actually below her season best of 6-feet.

If she even holds her place,



Junior Cody Snyder (top), freshman Meghan Dennis (above) and junior Megan Glisar will each make their first appearances in the NCAA Outdoor Track and Field Championships this year. The meet begins today (Wednesday) in Eugene, Ore., with Dennis competing today.



Glisar would earn second team All-American honors (top 16), but she has her eyes on a higher finish, she said.

"I just have to do my own thing," Glisar said. "Obviously we're all talented, and I just have to go in there and hope for a PR (personal record)."

Meghan Dennis

While athletes in events like pole vault, high jump or discus throw were able to work on their crafts throughout high school, Meghan Dennis had no such luck in the javelin.

A USD freshman from Gretna, Neb., Dennis hails from a state that does not have high school javelin, so she has had to learn the event basically from scratch — though there are some similarities between the throwing events.

She developed quickly enough to eventually qualify for the Division I Outdoor Track & Field Championships in Eugene. Dennis will compete tonight (Wednesday), the first of five USD athletes to take their shot.

"Basically, the coaches told me they look at people's body size and athleticism in high school, and recruited them to possibly try the other events," said Dennis, who is seeded 17th in the women's javelin throw with a qualifying mark of 159-feet-3.

"He knew I would be doing it, and I was all for it."

During the indoor season earlier this year, Dennis finished seventh in the shot put at the Summit League meet, held in Vermillion. Then last month, she won the Summit League outdoor title in the javelin at 157-feet-10.

"I knew it would come eventually, because I'm persistent and dedicated, but I didn't expect this," Dennis said of making the transition to the javelin.

When it comes to the D-I Championships, Dennis will have some work to do to crack the top eight for first team All-American. Lauren Kenney of Penn State enters with the number one ranking at 177-feet-2.

Still, Dennis is glad to be representing the Coyotes on the big stage, she said.

"It's still pretty surreal to me. I never would have thought I'd be going to division one nationals," Dennis said. "I'm not really too nervous yet, because it hasn't sunk in yet."

You can follow Jeremy Hoeck on Twitter at twitter.com/jhoeck

NCAA Meet: Oregon Women Hope To Complete 'Triple Crown' At Home

EUGENE, Ore. (AP) — A simple yet significant sign appeared in the women's locker room at Oregon's Hayward Field this year.

"Triple Crown. Every practice counts," it read.

Oregon's women have won both the NCAA cross country and the indoor championships. Only one other team, Texas in 1986, has ever added the outdoor title in the same school year for the so-called "Triple Crown."

The Ducks hope to be the second at

this year's championship, which starts Wednesday in Eugene.

Oregon hasn't won an outdoor title since 1985 but they've been close the past four years, finishing as runners up.

This year, there's a feeling that Oregon is well-poised for the triple crown, given their achievements so far and the home-track advantage. The women won the cross country title for the first time since 1987, then won a fourth straight indoor championship.

Coach Robert Johnson would like to

just focus on the team doing its best, but the triple-crown buzz has gotten louder as the season has progressed. And there's that sign in the locker room, too.

"I can't not think about it," he said ad the outdoor season got under way. "Everyone where I go people are talking about it."

The Oregon women are ranked No. 5 going into the championships and have 15 athletes taking part in the event. Top-ranked Kansas has 13 entrants, while No. 2 Texas A&M has 15.

"Coach Johnson always says 'Just be

Oregon every day,'" senior Jordan Hasay said. "We just need to do our best and train hard and the combination of all those things will make us ready."

Hasay, the most decorated track athlete in Oregon's history, will run the 5,000 meters in search of her first NCAA outdoor title. But she'll be challenged by Dartmouth junior Abbey D'Agostino, who became the first woman ever to win both the 3,000 and 5,000 meters at the indoor championships.

Oregon's women are expected to do

well in the 100 and 200 meter dashes because of junior sprinter English Gardner, who will be carrying a heavy load for the team by also running in the 4x100 and 4x400 relays.

One of the most intriguing women in the field is Liz Brenner, who will compete for the Ducks in the javelin. The sophomore has taken part in four Division I sports during her time at Oregon: volley-

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Yankton Junior Legion Squad Sweeps S.F. East

Yankton Post 12 scored in the bottom of the seventh to win game two and secure a sweep of Sioux Falls East in Junior American Legion baseball action on Tuesday at Riverside Field.

Yankton rolled to an 11-1 victory in the opener before battling to a 9-8 victory in the nightcap.

In the opener, Will Steward allowed one hit over four innings and got plenty of support to pick up the victory.

Austin Johnson went 3-3 with three runs scored to lead Yankton. Alex Crandall had two hits. Mitch Mueller doubled, and Steward, Brady Hale and Ben Cameron added hits in the win.

Wyatt Nielsen, Dallas Soyland and Jake Barkema had hits for East.

Zack Aaker took the loss.

Yankton took advantage of two errors in the bottom of the seventh in winning the nightcap.

Johnson and Mueller each had two hits, with Mueller recording two runs and two RBI to lead Yankton. Hale had a hit

and two RBI. Crandall, Cameron, Brad Ulmer and Greg Hauer added hits in the win.

The Yankton Junior Legion squad will compete in the Milt Simmons Tournament, beginning Friday in Sioux Falls.

Amateur

Avon 8, Freeman 0

FREEMAN — Avon's Nate Harrington tossed a complete game five-hitter as the Bards blanked Freeman 8-0 in South Central League amateur baseball action on Sunday.

Harrington struck out six on the mound, and helped his cause with a team-high three hits. Zach London, Dan Bures and Nick Honke had two hits each. Logan Tycz drove in two runs in the victory.

For Freeman, Alan Scherschmidt had a triple to lead the way.

Brett Scherschmidt took the loss.

Avon travels to Irene on Thursday. Freeman travels to Tabor on Friday.

Deacon Jones, Football's Most Feared Sackmaster, Passes Away

BY BARRY WILNER

AP Pro Football Writer

His nickname belied his calling. David "Deacon" Jones was the most feared member of the Fearsome Foursome, the original sackmaster.

Reggie White, Bruce Smith, Lawrence Taylor — they all followed the lead set by Jones, who died Monday at 74.

Deacon Jones was one of the greatest players in NFL history. Off the field, he was a true giant," said Redskins general manager Bruce Allen, whose father, George, coached Jones with the Los Angeles Rams. "His passion and spirit will continue to inspire those who knew him. He was a cherished member of the Allen family and I will always consider him my big brother."

Not only was Jones the main practitioner of the sack in his 14 pro seasons, he coined the term. He once compared bringing down quarterbacks to hog-tying them in a sack. He was smiling when he said it.

Yet Jones never got the statistical credit for all those QB knockdowns; sacks didn't become an

official statistic in the NFL until 1982.

Jones retired after the 1974 season, having played 11 years with the Rams, two with the Chargers and one with the Redskins. Rams stats show Jones with 159 1/2 sacks for them and 173 1/2 for his career — all unofficial, of course. Jones also was one of the most durable players, missing just five games in his pro career.

He entered the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1980.

"He was an icon among the icons," Commissioner Roger Goodell said. "Even with his fellow Hall of Famers, Deacon Jones held a special status. He was a hard-charging football player and the original sack artist who coined the term. He is warmly regarded by his peers not only as one of the greatest players in NFL history, but also for his tremendous influence and sense of humor."

Jones was held in such high esteem that when he made the league's 75th anniversary all-time squad, it prompted former teammate and fellow Hall of Famer Jack Youngblood to say: "Deacon Jones has been the most inspirational person in my football career."



NICK ROBINSON/P&D

Yankton Junior Legion second baseman Mitch Mueller lays down a tag on Sioux Falls East's Dallas Soyland in the opening game of a twinbill at Riverside Field in Yankton on Tuesday afternoon.